

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6, 8, and 17 are presently pending in this case. Claims 7 and 9-16 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph; and Claims 9-12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Abe et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20040015713, hereinafter "Abe") in view of Yoshida et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20020042777, hereinafter "Yoshida"). Claims 1-6, 8, and 17 were allowed.

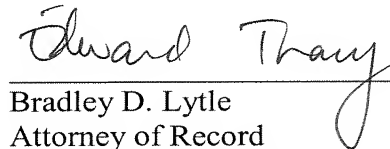
Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 1-6, 8, and 17.

With regard to the outstanding rejections of Claims 7 and 9-16, Claims 7 and 9-16 are canceled herewith, making these rejections moot.

Accordingly, the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

Edward W. Tracy, Jr.
Registration No. 47,998